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SUBJECT: Creating Gender Sensitive ICT Synergies

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) plans to launch an "E-Village" project that will integrate a number of information and communications technologies (ICT) efforts underway in Jordan with the construction of a computer assembly plant in a village near Madaba. Deema Bibi, UNIFEM ICT program manager for the Arab Region, told EconOff the project's three main objectives were training, economic opportunities, and raising gender awareness. The E-Village will form an ICT hub that incorporates gender-sensitive strategies into various ICT initiatives. UNIFEM is in the final stages of completing its project plan and hopes to secure the necessary sponsorships and commitments by Fall 2003. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) The E-Village project will offer a series of different training programs to increase the capacity and professional skills of village residents. The Ministry of Education will pilot the E-Learning initiative in E-Village schools. In conjunction with their current programs, NetCorps and Microsoft plan to offer IT training and career development workshops. UNIFEM also hopes to create an ICT incubator where citizens receive professional support to transform their ideas into software/IT programs.

¶3. (U) In addition to training, UNIFEM is working with the GOJ, the private sector, and the local IT association, Intaj, to provide economic opportunities to the village. American-based Polywell has agreed to set up a computer assembly plant in the E-Village where villagers can apply newly learned skills. Intaj plans to assist in the construction of an E-Services center where program graduates can work on national ICT initiatives. UNIFEM also hopes to construct a career counseling and job placement center.

¶4. (U) The final objective of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of both ICT in development and of involving women in the development process. UNIFEM is working with its partners to ensure that its ICT strategies in the E-Village specifically target gender inequities. UNIFEM will also use the E-Village to host policy advocacy activities to support mainstreaming women into ICT.

¶5. (U) COMMENT: While many ICT projects in the region address gender discrepancies in their strategies, the E-Village's promotion of gender awareness as a central tenet of the initiative is unique. END COMMENT

GNEHM